1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

175* 177 565 287 177 273 567 439 175* 439 567 175*

influences. The stock to which the common people belong were wearers of skins, which is true of many of them to the present time. The people from whom the ruling houses came have a highly developed weaving industry. The 'Ngangela' neighbours, who have also contributed elements to the racial make-up of the Ovimbundu, make and use bark-cloth. The Ovimbundu evidently gave up the use of skins for clothing more than a hundred years ago.[1] This fact, and the additional one that they never developed weaving or bark-cloth industries, was probably due to their early and widespread use of trade-cloth. Rum came with the slave-trade from Brazil. They were almost inseparable. The ships which fetched the slaves came laden with rum distilled in Brazil. The rum was used in buying the slaves, and much more of it was consumed by Ovimbundu—traders, chiefs, and retainers—than by the interior people. Thus, while the slave-trade had such a disruptive influence in the life of the interior tribes, rum did much to corrupt the Ovimbundu. Native tradition[2] and the accounts of early travellers agree on this point. Rum continued to come from Brazil and from other countries or oversea colonies all through this early period, but import was partly supplanted by distillation at the coast, and this process was soon learned by the Ovimbundu themselves.

The part which the Umbundu trade had in spreading the goods and uses of the outside world is a fascinating subject and one which would repay study. Ethnographical and historical knowledge of Central Africa is not yet so extensive or precise that the dates and places of these movements can be plotted with certainty. Professor C. M. Doke records that Nkumine, who ruled the Lamba sometime before 1840, sold many of his people 'as slaves to the Mbundu traders from the West Coast for calico, guns, and powder'.[3] It is important to remember that throughout this period the Ovimbundu were for all this part of Africa the chief intermediaries in the slave-trade. These activities affected the ultimate

[1] See Magyar, *passim*.

[2] A Ngalangi tradition says that from the time of King Ndumba II (*c.* 1840) rum was so plentiful that it was poured into troughs, whence it was lapped up by all—men, women, and children. A constant difficulty encountered by the early missionaries was the objection of chiefs and their counsellors to the missionaries' refusal to give liberal presents of rum, as did all the traders.

[3] C. M. Doke, *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia* (London: Harrap, 1931), pp. 36, 37.

Formerly it was believed that a smith owed his skill to the help of the spirit of a person whom he had killed, and wooden effigies of this person were kept by the smith.(1) 326 782

The principal products of a blacksmith's forge are axe-heads, hoe blades,(2) tools for mat-making, arrowheads, knives, and brass bracelets. Iron, which is fairly plentiful, was formerly smelted over charcoal fires.(3) Today smiths use scrap iron. 325 412

Pottery

Pot-making is a part of women's work among the Ovimbundu. A wheel is not used. Clay is mixed with a silicate, usually gravel, rolled out in long ropes, and the pot built by the coiling process.(4) Pots are ornamented when wet by making deep incisions with a piece of gourd; they are then sun-dried, and fired in a kiln of dry grass. Pots are used as water-containers, as cooking vessels and as vessels for storing corn and beans, and, when made in a very large size, for brewing beer.(5) 323 [462]

No ritual attaches to pot-making, except at the opening of a new clay-pit, when, in the presence of both men and women from the village, the medicine-man sacrifices a chicken over the open pit.(6) [782]

Weaving and Spinning

Looms have not been used among the Ovimbundu since they have been a people, although progenitors of the kingly families who came from the Bangala or Congo groups may have done weaving. Trade cloth has been known and used by the Ovimbundu for nearly 300 years.(7) Skins have been used in remote areas; Hambly when he mentions bark-cloth as being worn by the Ovimbundu is probably referring to the Ngangela. Spun cotton, however, is used for repairs, and there is a cotton plant in most gardens. Spinning is done always by men.(8) 286 439 [281] [287] [283] 462

Basketry

All girls learn to make baskets, although some become more proficient than others. Knowledge of basket-making implies also an understanding of dyeing, since coloured strands of grass are interwoven to make geometric patterns.(9) Baskets, and also basket-trays, are usually made by the coiling process.(10) 285 462 [386]

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.158-60. The ceremony was described from Njangolo village in Elende.
(2) See Cashmore, 1944, pp.140-1.
(3) For details of the blacksmith's forge and tools, see Hambly, op.cit., pp.160-1; Cashmore, 1944, pp.139, 140, 145-6.
(4) See Hambly, op.cit. Plates XXXIII and XXXIV, and Childs, 1949, Plate VIII.
(5) Hambly, op.cit., p.168; Cashmore, op.cit., pp.144-5.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.169.
(7) Childs, personal communication. See also Childs, 1949, p.171, note 1.
(8) See Hambly, p.177, and Cashmore, 1944, p.136.
(9) Red, yellow, black, and brown dyes are used. For a description of the process, see Hambly, op.cit., pp.170-1.
(10) See Hambly, op.cit., p.171, and Cashmore, op.cit., pp.141-2 for details of basket-making. Also for illustrations Hambly, op.cit. and Childs, 1949.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbunc..

In addition to pouches, hide is used by the Ovimbundu for the seats of four-legged wooden stools. Before stretching the hide over the wooden frame the edge of the leather is cut into strips which are interlaced on the under side of the stool (Plate XVIII, Fig. 1). There are few evidences of the hide having been dressed; usually the hair is attached. The Ovimbundu understand the dressing of hides in a crude way. The hide is soaked, after which the inner surface is rubbed with ashes. The hair is scraped away and the hide is tightly pegged out. Hide was formerly used for covering wooden boxes in which a king carried his powder and possessions to war. Scraped hide is used to form the tympanum in tubular wooden druma.

In only one part of Angola, notably in the south among the Vakuanyama, is leather used as clothing. Women wear pleated skirts of hide and several broad leather belts, while the men have small leather aprons in front and behind. Men only are the leather workers. The hide is soaked and trampled under foot for many hours in order to soften it and make it pliable; the hair is not removed. Before leather clothing is worn it is thickly greased with a mixture of fat and red powder from *tukula* wood (Plates LXV, Figs. 1–3; LXVII, Fig. 1).

SPINNING AND WEAVING

My interpreter Ngonga remembers the use of a heavy upright loom about twenty years ago, but this loom is not used at the present time among the Ovimbundu. The Ovimbundu have been in contact with Europeans for three centuries. This has not been a close and permanent contact, but it has been sufficient to account for the disappearance of a one-time essential art. There are in Elende some very fine raffia palm trees, but no use is made of the leaf fiber for manufacturing clothes. Bark cloth is not made by the Ovimbundu of Elende, but I have seen the Vangangella and Ovimbundu of Ngalangi engaged in stripping, beating, and preparing bark for use as clothing, which is formed of one piece wound round the body. The bark cloth is not dyed or decorated with patterns.

Frequently at Elende men are seen engaged in spinning cotton which is used for repairs, and not for fabricating garments. The cotton is obtained from a shrub which has reddish leaves and yellow flowers. The cotton may be seen protruding from the calyx in the months of June and July. The man who is winding holds high in his left hand a slender stick which is wrapped for a length of two feet with fluffy cotton. All work of pressing and twisting the cotton into a thread is done by the thumb and index finger of the right hand.